



Illustration by Jeanne R. Janish,
From 'Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest'

RANUNCULUS GELIDUS **ARCTIC BUTTERCUP**

Arctic Buttercup is a short-lived perennial with 1-several slender, erect or ascending stems that are 3-9 cm tall arising from fibrous roots. The basal leaves have long petioles and broadly spade-shaped blades that are 1-2 cm long and variously deeply-moderately divided with 3-13 lobes. Stem leaves are lacking or reduced to small, 3-lobed, leaf like bracts. Foliage is glabrous below but sparsely short-hairy above. Flowers are generally solitary at the stem tips. The 5 spreading or reflexed, purplish sepals are 2-5 mm long, and the yellow petals are 3-5 mm long and taper to a narrow stalk at the base. There are numerous stamens, and 30-80 glabrous achenes; each is ca. 2 mm long with a short curved beak and borne in a short-cylindric cluster. Mature fruit in August.

Other high elevation *RANUNCULUS* differ from this species in that *R. ESCHSCHOLTZII* has petals greater than 8 mm long, *R. VERECUNDUS* has seeds less than 2 mm long, and *R. PYGMAEUS* has petals usually less than 3 mm long. A hand lens or microscope and technical key are needed for positive identification.